ABASED ENGLISH SPEECH

VIEWS OF GEORGE RIDDLE, THE NOTED SHAKSPEAREAN READER.

He Thinks a Decadence is Marked in the Common Slipshod Utterances and Mispronunciations.

George Riddle, in New York Sun.

The English language is becoming more and more the language of the world, in commerce, social intercourse and in promoting peace among the nations. When spoken by the best speakers it is the most vigorous as well as the sweetest and most poetical language. Yet, in its usual utterance or delivery, even among educated people, it is the most abused language in the world, especially in the United States.

The very few men and women who have a high standard of speech have not been able to make that standard generally recognized, and, consequently, there have been manifest for the last twenty years a carelessness and vulgarity of speech, accompanied by slouchiness of manner, in all the professions and in society, which may well bring forth the query: Is the art of delivery a lost art, and what is to be the end of this shameful decadence?

The main essentials of delivery, on which the clearness of our discourse depends, are correct pronunciation and distinct enunciation. Manner, which includes attitude and gesture, is another essential.

In France, the standard of speech is irrevocably the French of Paris; in Germany, the German of Hanover; in Italy, the Italian of Florence; in Spain, the Spanish of Madrid.

There is a tradition of speech in those cities which neither eccentricity nor caprice has been able to destroy.

What is the standard of English speech? It cannot be located in any one place. It might be fair to say that he speaks the best English whose speech does not betray his nationality and environment, whether he be from London, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Boston or Kalamazoo.

WHERE THE DIFFERENCE IS.

The principal difference of speech between educated Americans and English is one of intonation and inflection, not of vowel sounds and it may be added that no American need feel flattered when told that he speaks like an Englishman, for the American has more variety of speech.

The principal advantage of the Englishman lies in the fact that tradition of speech obtains more with him than with the American. The English are not forever dickering and changing the pronunciation of words. Nothing seems to delight the American orthoepist more than to apply the provincialisms of his particular locality and environment to words which have elsewhere had a stable pronunciation for generations. Some years ago Webster, from Connecticut, ordered keg to be pronounced cag, and for years the spinsters of New England surrounded their oleander cags and gardening beds with clam-shell borders. At a time when the theater was emerging from the curses of the prejudiced, and when sane persons had ceased to consider it a concoction of the devil, Worcester spoke of the drayma, and then we began to hear of Cleopaytra.

Happily, the Anglo-Saxon is a great traveler, and people have come out of their narrow shells. To speak good English one must travel or associate with those who have traveled. Every country has its dialects. It is not so many years ago that a north Scotsman could hardly understand a south Scotsman, and the worst insult you could give to a native of the region of Robert Burns was to tell him that he talked like a native of Aberdeen. An inhabitant of the county of Armagh, Ireland, detects the speech of the county of Kerry, and vice versa.

INDIGENOUS DIALECT.

The United States has its own indigenous dialects, besides those introduced from non-english speaking countries. They may be classified broadly as Yankee, Western and Southern, although of late a new cockney dialect has been introduced by the American "smart set," which affords much diversion to our English cousins.

It is the diffusion of these dialects into our every-day speech which, if allowed to proceed will work ruin to the beauty of our language.

When even college professors use such vulgarisms of speech, as nooz for news, git for get, gut for got, ben for been, and so on, almost ad infinitum, it is time to call a halt. That which Artemus Ward meant for satirical dialect when he wrote from Boston, "I meant to have allooded to the Grate Orgin," is no exaggeration of most of the English heard to-day in schools and colleges.

A few Jeremiahs have already protested in the minor key, but the minor key does not appeal forcibly to Americans, a large part of whom are athletic-mad.

A jeremiad, even if uttered through a megaphone, cannot reach the ears of a vast population on the golf links, the gridiron, the diamond, the tennis courts and the rivers and lakes.

The response of the exuberant Isaiahs to any suggested reform of speech may be interpreted: "This is the age of steam, electricity and the telegraph. We must have rapid transit in all things, even in education. You are too slow. Art is short, because life is fleeting. New methods of inefficient insufficiency are what we want. We prefer to take lessons in singing, on the piano, the violin or the mandolin rather than in speaking. Our speech is at least intelligible."

A SUPERFICIAL AGE.

This is the age of steam and electricity with a vengeance. It is the age of indolent superficiality skimming over the surface of things in its alleged eclecticism of education and "culture." It is the age of overcrowded curricula in schools and colleges with athletics on top and pure speech at the bottom. It is the age when the fiat goes forth, "Boys and girls, if you can spell a word correctly, it matters not how you pronounce it. You will be understood somehow, and if you are not, it makes no difference. After all, if you speak too distinctly and correctly, you may not be easily understood."

The hissing of steam and the generation of electricity in the educational scheme are nothing but the agents of restless and ineffectual persons who indulge in pother and parade. It has been well said that the real work of this world is performed in silence.

It is not alone in schools and colleges that one hears detestable English, and sees loose-jointedness and awkwardness.

Listen to the clergy. No wonder that Bishop Potter lately pronounced the entrance into the pulpit of a minister unable to speak the English language with correctness and elegance an impertinent intrusion.

Go to the Senate and House of Representatives, to the State Legislature and to the Courts of Justice! You will see slouchy and indolent attitudes, you will hear senators and representatives butcher the King's English while twisting the British lion's tail, and you will hear legislators and lawyers talk of the lorof (law of) the land.

Go into the fashionable drawing rooms and listen to the twaddle on athletics and the mispronunciation of the hoodlums of Fifth avenue, the Back Bay and Walnut street.

THE THEATERS OFFEND.

Go to the theaters! Witness a modern production of a Shakspearian play, and you will see a panorama of splendidly-designed scenery, a cunningly-devised scheme of lighting, with "the star" chased by the lime-light, appropriate costumes and artistic groupings. But the delivery of the lines retains all the hideous mouthings and vices of fifty years ago, vices reformed altogether by Edwin Forrest and Edwin Booth in their later days, but now revived in "modern productions." Modern? As far as delivery is concerned they are, in the words of Aristophanes, "antediluvian and full of grasshoppers." These are parlous times, Shepherd.

There is not time to dwell on all the causes and growth of this deplorable decadence of speech, which appeared and developed like a pestilence, all at once and in every direction. It is enough that the plague is here, and it must be met. It ought to be stamped out in homes, but little assistance is to be expected in those quarters, for the plague is as "ordinary" as the "lunacy" of love. A peculiar phase of the disease is the unconsciousness of being afflicted by its insidious growth, but as ignorance of the law does not prevent a transgressor from being punished by the law, so the unconscious violator of pure speech is subject to criticism, no matter how lofty his position.

While in our material growth and prosperity we have learned to consider ourselves as little below the dwellers of the angelic belt, we are, nevertheless, a nation of imitators, and it is well that the country has produced some worthy models.

Since the deaths of Wendell Phillips and Henry Ward Beecher no one, by the most elastic stretch of the imagination, has appeared who in manner is worthy to be called an orator. Great speeches may have been written, but their delivery has not been great. There is no American orator living who is worthy to be imitated.

I would like to give a few instances to show the power of imitation. A young author of distinction was invited to deliver a poem before the Phi Beta Kappa of a great American university. Not being accustomed to public speaking he took the precaution to be coached by an instructor in elocution. With the usual American audacity, which is contemporary with steam and electricity, he expected to be prepared—and to a certain extent was prepared—in four hours. At his rehearsal he could be heard with ease in all parts of the hall, and "he stood like a gentleman."

ORATOR AND POET.

According to custom he was preceded by the orator, a man of learning, force and power, whose oration was largely devoted to the destruction of the Greek language in superbly constructed English, but, unhappily, delivered with a nasal tone and with a manner not suggestive of Grecian grace, though from its assurance it was meant to suggest naturalness and ease. The orator rested his right elbow on the desk, his left arm was akimbo and his legs were crossed.

The poet, who had sat behind the orator, then advanced to the desk, and throwing his four hours of instruction to the four winds, deliberately imitated the delivery and awkward manner of the orator.

Again, during one of the political campaigns in Massachusetts, several young college graduates were invited to speak at a meeting, which was to be addressed by older speakers. The latter had their old-fashioned fling first, using the monotonous cadences employed before the revolutionary war and giving the impression of playing a part rather than of projecting their own personalities.

The young men, who were charming speakers in their college days when under guidance, imitated their elders, like the latter ending each sentence with an exasperating rising inflection.

Neither the Phi Beta Kappa poet nor the young graduates had had enough training. In a word, they were not artists. A little training, like a little learning, is a dangerous thing.

It is difficult to be simple, natural and effective at the same time. It requires years of practice, and every attempt to break away from assiduous training has ended in the contemptible hand-in-the-pocket oratory, which had its nascency in Harvard College.

Pronunciation and enunciation should be taught and acquired in childhood. It is scandalous that the professors and instructors in elocution of our universities should be compelled to devote so much time to the correction of vulgarisms of speech and the slurring and mumbling of words. It is more scandalous when a corrected student asserts, "If I were to speak correctly at home, I should be laughed at by the members of my family and the neighbors. I should be considered as putting on airs."

CORRECT SPEECH IMPORTANT.

It may or may not be true that the curricula of schools are already too crowded. It is true that every teacher is apt to think his specialty the most important, and, backed by outside influence, he pushes his work to the front, and the devil takes the hindmost.

Nothing should be more important than correct speech. Even music is now taught in many public schools and poverty-stricken indeed is that household which is not furnished with some musical instrument or some screeching Marin or James.

That beautiful music well rendered is a refining influence is not to be disputed. But young men and women not possessed of musical voices and the talent to play musical instruments should not be encouraged beyond a love and appreciation of music, and many neighborhoods would thus be rid of much cacophonous caterwauling.

It is probable that the revival of debating by the universities may restore the vogue of the orator.

The best speaking of to-day is that which is heard on university debating platforms, and it is largely due to the fact that "the teams" are coached in manner as well as matter.

Still there is room for improvement in pronunciation. At a recent debate between Harvard and Yale, both sides as well as the presiding officer were offenders. The latter constantly said argumunt (argument), and the youthful debaters spoke of wotter (water), silunce (silence), an (and), wen (when), etc.

The authorities of universities might with propriety retort that in order to make the study of delivery an intellectual pursuit, it is neither necessary nor sane to establish a psychic relation between the thorax and the lobes of the ears, nor to develop the soul by tone-coloring.

As for the clergy, they may well be

"Left to heaven.
And to those thorns that in their bosoms lodge,
To prick and sting them."

Let them practice, which is Aristotle's definition of virtue.

The "smart set," which is synonomous with the "dull set," will reform its speech when it is the fashion to do so. The best elements of the complex structure of society will be guided by and will listen to the moral force of awakened public sentiment.

LIKES INDIANAPOLIS.

John Temple Graves Writes His Impressions to Atlanta Journal.

In a letter to the Atlanta Journal, dated at Indianapolis on Oct. 31, John Temple Graves has the following to say about things he has observed in this part of the country:

"A week of rather careful observation in these great middle States gives me definite assurance that the Washington dinner makes about the same impression here that it does in Georgia.

"With the difference that comment here is as much more guarded as the conditions are different among the people who speak.

"The opinion is general and quietly expressed that the President made a mistake, and that his attitude does not represent the feeling of the white people of these States on this question of social equality.

"I could give you the names of some gentlemen who entertain this view who are so high in station and so representative in character that the mere mention of them would give immense emphasis to the quiet condemnation of the President's impulsive error. But of course the sanctity of a private conversation among gentlemen, cannot be violated even for the pleasure of giving these great names to the readers of the Journal. It is sufficient to say that they occupy a station so near to the President and so potential in the policies of the state and government that what they think may well be taken to represent the public opinion of this section of the Union.

"Senator Foraker is making constant use of the Washington dinner in his fiery speeches in the Ohio campaign. The senator is fighting for the Legislature and his own re-election, but it comes to me direct that his defense of Roosevelt is inspired by the fact that the Democrats of Ohio are using the incident with great effect in the state campaign, and that Foraker and the Republicans are on the defensive.

"Ohio has less real love for the negro than any other middle State. The riot at Akron, the riot at Washington Courthouse, the trouble at Cleveland, and the memorable row over the mixed public schools at Felicity, all illustrates a race prejudice which is as virile in Ohio as in Georgia. And there can be no doubt that Senator Foraker and his party are in danger of losing votes in the state contest, as a result of our Rough Rider's indiscriminate hospitality.

"I am willing to bet a dollar against a doughnut that Booker Washington does not receive another invitation to dinner at the White House, and that he will have no successors of his own color at the presidential board.

"It will do to watch this development, for if the President means social equality, he will give us another example of it.

"This city of Indianapolis is growing as fast and as finely as any of the third-rate cities of the United States. It has added some 20 per cent. to its population within the decade, and new and elegant structures of public and private character are going up all the time.

"Within the present year the old Bates Hotel, one of the best in the middle States, and valued at $250,000, has been torn down and there is now building on its site a hotel to cost $1,000,000, and to be, when completed, one of the most elegant and complete in the whole country.

"But I like Indianapolis for the prevailing kindness and hearty hospitality of its people. It is more like Philadelphia in its spirit than any of the Western towns, and both its social and intellectual life are of the highest and most delightful order. The capital of Indiana is forging ahead of the capital of Ohio in population, in progress, in the quality of its public buildings and in the spirit and temper of its people.

"I spent a couple of days in bluegrass Kentucky this week and gathered the impression that Henry Watterson's candidacy for Governor is not seriously regarded there.

"The brilliant and erratic editor undoubtedly has a strong hold upon the affections of the people of his State. They love him in spite of all inconsistencies, and even indulge his faults.

"He has also a powerful hold upon the imaginations of Kentuckians, who tell the most improbable stories in connection with him. For instance, I had three well-educated and prominent gentlemen to tell me in perfect seriousness that Watterson's salary as editor of the Courier-Journal was $25,000 a year!

"The Kentucky mind always looks out upon the world through a magnifying glass of great power.

"'Endurin' of the war,' one of these bluegrass hero-worshipers confided to a friend, in good faith, the information that in a master fight down on the Massasip, John C. Breckinridge, Kentucky's noble son, had, with his own hand, slain a hundred thousand Yankees!

"And Mr. Watterson is a prophet honored in his own country. He is, in fact, a bigger man in Kentucky than he is anywhere else.

"He is a brilliant, genial gentleman, and deserves the good things that come to him. But he is not a statesman. He is devoid of the logical faculty and is free enough and honest enough to change his mind whenever he pleases—just as a gentleman should."

SCHEME FOR A MODEL CITY.

An Interesting Feature Proposed for the St. Louis Fair.

Chicago Post.

A scheme for a model city to be erected in the confines of the St. Louis world's fair will be adopted this evening at a meeting of the Municipal Art Society of New York at the National Arts Club, 37 West Thirty-fourth street. The following committee was appointed last week by John De Witt Warner, president of the society, to prepare a report on the subject: Charles C. Haight, chairman; Charles R. Lamb, Charles M. Robinson, Mrs. E. Hegeman Hall, Charles R. Crandall and Albert Kelsey, of Philadelphia.

Mr. Lamb, who has been prominent in formulating the scheme for the model city, said to-day that it was proposed to suggest to the St. Louis authorities that a small plaza be set apart for the purpose in view. On it could be erected an administration building, fire and police departments, a hospital, and departments of parks, street cleaning, lampposts, signs, etc.

"All the important administrative departments of a city," Mr. Lamb went on to say, "could be centralized in this way at an expense of from $200,000 to $300,000, in addition to what it would cost to erect them in different parts of the city. But they would afford a valuable object lesson, if our scheme should be carried out, of how these departments of a city should be conducted.

"If St. Louis properly recognizes the importance of this enterprise it will get to work on it at once. Our overtures in the matter have been favorably received by ex-Governor Francis, president of the exposition. There is a tremendous waste connected with these world's fairs. The expenses at Buffalo were over $6,000,000 and at Chicago over $30,000,000. Now, at St. Louis, for instance, the electric light poles, the signposts, the hydrants and fountains, etc., could be made, after the most approved fashion, of permanent material, and after the exposition is over could be used in the city.

"St. Louis has already appropriated $1,000,000 to make the city attractive to visitors. If the authorities would devote one-quarter of that sum to the scheme of a model city advocated by the Municipal Art Society of New York it would be greatly to their advantage. The sum of $15,000,000 has been guaranteed by the national and state governments for the exposition.

"The erection of a model city at St. Louis such as I have outlined would be a big drawing card. It has never been done before at any exposition. Our cities are becoming more and more crowded every year, and it is of paramount importance that they should be healthy places of residence. The science of living in the great cities must be carefully studied, and every object lesson of how a city may be made more healthy and more beautiful is unquestionably of great value."

WHAT AILS ROYALTY?

Irish Theory that It Is Too Much Intermarried for Health.

Justin McCarthy, in the Independent.

A curious fact, which is perhaps not always borne in mind by American readers, is that the reigning royal houses of Europe may be said almost literally to belong to a single family. An interesting article which I have just been reading in the Dublin Freeman's Journal, the leading newspaper of Ireland, insists that one main cause of the illnesses which at present affect so many royal houses in Europe is to be found in the fact that "the sovereigns of Europe have disregarded that great law of nature which discountenances the marriages of near blood relations." The article goes on to tell us that while "there are in Europe over a score of emperors, kings and minor reigning sovereigns, all but two are the descendants of James I of England, the only child of the marriage of Darnley and Mary Queen of Scots." The King of Sweden, who, as everybody knows, is the descendant of Marshal Bernadotte, one of the soldiers whom the great Napoleon raised from the ranks and set upon a throne, and the Prince of Montenegro, who became a sovereign ruler within the recollection of us all, are almost the only exceptions. The result of this condition of things naturally is that European princes and princesses are compelled to marry "in and in," if I may use that colloquial expression when dealing with such a subject—in other words, have to find their marriage consorts in families more or less nearly related to their own.

The traditional custom of royal families in Europe does not sanction the introduction of actual strangers to marriage with those of a reigning family. This custom was, of course, disregarded by self-made monarchs like Napoleon III of France, but these revolutionary leaders—revolutionary in every sense—do not count for much in the history of imperial and royal houses. We have just heard that an Austrian archduchess has resolved to marry the man of her choice, although he is not a member of a reigning family. The late Queen Victoria is much commended by the writer of the article in the Freeman's Journal for her courage and good sense in sanctioning and promoting the marriage of a daughter and granddaughter to men who were not of imperial or royal family. But Queen Victoria was a woman very much in advance of the habitudes and traditions which governed the doings of nearly all other European sovereigns, and the innovations which she promoted do not much affect the general state of things in Europe. At present there is hardly a European imperial or royal family which is not oppressed by serious and boding illness of some kind, and it is only reasonable to say that some explanation of this fact may be found in this system of intermarriage. It is certainly a curious historical fact that the dynasty of the Stuarts, in many ways the worst dynasty that ever ruled over England, should have left so many descendants among the reigning houses of Europe.

PREFER GOOD SPELLING,

Still It Is Undoubtedly True that a Bad Speller May Prosper.

Chicago Tribune.

The other day one of the speakers at a meeting of the Hull House Woman's Club was asked whether the new methods of teaching spelling had not proved to be failures and whether there were not more poor spellers now than there used to be. The answer to this was: "I cannot see that the question is of importance. The end of all existence is not to learn to spell. If a child can't spell when he leaves high school he will learn to do so ultimately. For my part, I would prefer a boy who could think and not spell to one who could spell and not think."

It is true that a man can be a great merchant, statesman, painter or poet and yet be a poor speller. There are many men who cannot spell correctly and yet have rendered great services to their country. Possibly they could not have been any more useful than they were had they been past masters of orthography. Nevertheless, it is altogether expedient at the present time that boys and girls should learn to spell correctly. It is better to do so before leaving the high school or the grammar school, for not many learn afterward.

At this time a misspelt word is looked on by whoever knows it is misspelt as the earmark of a defective education. It may be said that this is a prejudice, but prejudices must be reckoned with. If a genius or a statesman is seen using his knife where he should use his fork he is no less a genius or a statesman than he was before, but a great many persons jump at the conclusion that he was badly brought up, and they do not think quite so much of him as they did. If they find him making blunders in the spelling of common words they have a feeling of pained surprise.

There are many employers who still have prejudices in favor of correct spelling. They do not wish to have in their employ persons who make what they consider unpardonable blunders. The boy who has in him the making of a merchant prince will get there no matter what liberties he may take with the letters of a word. The boy who has only the abilities of a clerk will find it hard to make progress if he takes similar liberties.

The day may come when spelling will be anarchistic, every man following his own sweet will. Until that day shall come it will be prudence on the part of the rising generation to learn to spell in accordance with established forms, absurd though they may seem. This will not impair the literary, artistic or business capacity any of those who belong to that generation may possess. It will help many to earn a decent living and enable them to escape the jibes and jeers which persons who can spell correctly permit themselves at the expense of those who cannot.

RISE OF THE CRAWFISH.

How the Demand for This Crustacean Has Grown.

New Orleans Times-Democrat.

The crawfish is quietly resting on his oars, busying himself about his own little affairs, building mud chimneys above his nest to protect himself from the wily raccoon's reach, and awaiting with apparent composure the time when he is to stagger to the center of the stage, hind end foremost, as it were, and when he will play his usual engagement of sixty days with the epicures.

The crawfish is peculiar in many respects, but this fact has robbed him of none of his sweetness of flavor, nor has it detracted one iota from his dietary value from the viewpoint of the epicurean caterer.

But few crawfish are found in the market at this season of the year.

Occasionally, however, in the Old Quarter one may find even at this season of the year a few members of this crustacean group, but they are used for flavoring purposes, or as trimming for some of the other dishes peculiar to the lower section of the city. In the larger restaurants they are not known this early in the season. Later on, the heavy influx of visitors to this point on account of trade and other attractions, will probably force the larger restaurants to pay more attention to the crawfish, for the influx of visitors will create a demand for dishes peculiar to New Orleans, and the various caterers generally manage to meet the demand. Measuring between the earliest appearance of the crawfish in the local market, and the latest date on which he is found in the market, the season will run for six months. But fishermen and men who make money out of the crawfish industry count simply on two months, March and April. During these two months crawfish are plentiful in this section, and all through the valley above this point.

They thrive in fresh water, in shallow lakes and bayous, and along the edges of the smaller streams.

Millions of these creatures are marketed and consumed in New Orleans annually. They are a delicious food when properly prepared, and crawfish bisque has become one of the famed dishes of this city.

How many crawfish are marketed and consumed during the season in this city cannot be estimated definitely. Roughly speaking, it would be necessary to count them by the carload, for independent of the consumption in the hotels and restaurants a great quantity is consumed by families who gather them for themselves.

"During the crawfish season," said a gentleman who is connected with a popular place in Royal street, "I suppose we consume 500 or 600 buckets of crawfish. We buy them by the bucket, paying anywhere from 20 to 30 cents a bucket for them. The price, of course, depends on the abundance or scarcity of the article. We use the quantity indicated during the two months which constitute the crawfish season, March and April. Of course we have a few crawfish before the season opens well and after it has closed, but the season, properly speaking, is in March and April."

At the fish market during the season they simply pour in from all sections. They are caught in nets. They are docile and clumsy, and it is easy enough to gather them by the dozens. They are always found in shallow water, and during the season boys find great amusement in fishing for them, and they frequently use cotton twine for fishing lines and bended pins for hooks. The crawfish is easily caught and not infrequently as many as six are found on one line. Their reasoning powers, if they have any at all, is at a low ebb. However, they have learned something about defensive methods, and one may be convinced of this by an examination of a crawfish nest at the edge of a lagoon, a creek or a bayou. The nest is simply a hole large enough to admit the body. It is burrowed below the water level, or is connected by a small tunnel with the main body of water, so that the crawfish may have access to the stream or lagoon for feeding purposes. Like other crustaceans he is fond of vegetable juices, the smaller aquatic insects and things of that sort.

Above his nest he usually constructs a mud chimney, and it will stand sometimes eight or ten inches above the ground. This is probably a defensive institution. Raccoons are fond of crawfish and they make nightly pilgrimages in quest of these crustaceans. They reach down into the nests wherever they find them, yank the clawed and tentacled fellows out and devour them on the spot. Mud chimneys make it harder for the raccoon to reach them, and at least puts the forest marauder to more trouble. The chimneys are not works of art. They are plain, awkward heaps of mud, but built in layers and hollowed out very much after the fashion of the mud chimneys built by man in more primitive sections of the world.

These nests are also used for a sort of place of refuge for the younger members when they begin to take on the form of their kind and before they are able to measure strength with the other creatures which live under the same conditions.

AN ENGINEER IN RUSSIA.

How an American Met Unaccustomed Difficulties.

M. G. Cunniff, in The World's Work.

Modest William McCarroll, type of the American engineer who does things, went to Sergieff, Russia, to set a consignment of Baldwin locomotives. He found them in parts, filling countless boxes dumped in the snow. A little railroad ran half way to the main line on which the engines were to run. The interval was a hummocky waste. The thermometer was twenty degrees below zero. One by one from the sparse hamlets of the region he picked up 125 Russian peasants; hoisted his boxes with ropes and primitive pries upon flat cars; ran the cars to the rail head; and scrutinized the steppe before him; ridges, gullies, holes and hills—with massive locomotive boilers to be transported across them. From the scant materials at hand he made a great sled, piled snow upon it and rolled a boiler in the snow. Half of the hundred peasants hauled on a long rope; the other fifty went ahead constructing trestles over the gullies and cuts through the iron soil of the hillocks. Day after day in the biting cold the human pack animals dragged those locomotive parts until all had reached the workshop—a frigid Russian hillside. At Philadelphia ten engines could be set up in a day; in Russia it took ten weeks for one.

Nor was there a holiday when the completed engines stood ready on the track. Water, which froze on the way, had to be carried half a mile and then melted. Mild fires had to be maintained to keep it melted. And when at last a wood fire was roaring in the firebox of the first locomotive, and the engine was proudly puffing up the new track, the rails spread two miles from camp and the engine went pilot foremost down the bank. Consider the plight of a single engineer, with a locomotive on its nose in a snow bank, a few wooden levers, a rope and a gang of ignorant Slavs. But "off again" with McCarroll, was "on again," if it took all the White Czar's subjects to help him; for by dint of the snow shoveling and the tugging of two hundred peasants the engine returned to the rails. Mr. McCarroll says the whole feat "took a little scheming." It may have been brilliant engineering.

Fire and Chemicals.

New York Commercial-Advertiser.

Relative to fire protection in the large office buildings, it would seem that the fire department has now gone crazy. Five or six years ago there were comparatively no regulations, the means for fighting fire in large buildings were inefficient, they were mere ornaments. Now the fire department compels the placing of a six-inch standpipe in all buildings over 120 feet in height, regardless of size; this is silly. Fighting fire with water is becoming antiquated. In a building handsomely decorated, more damage is done by the fire department using water than is sustained by the fire itself. Some day large buildings will be piped for the use of chemicals. When a fire breaks out, the compartment in which it started will be closed and the chemical valve opened. Should the fire spread beyond one compartment a whole floor could be cut off and subjected to chemical action. This is a recognized mode of fighting fire at sea. There they use steam, but chemicals are better, as the moisture of steam would be damaging.